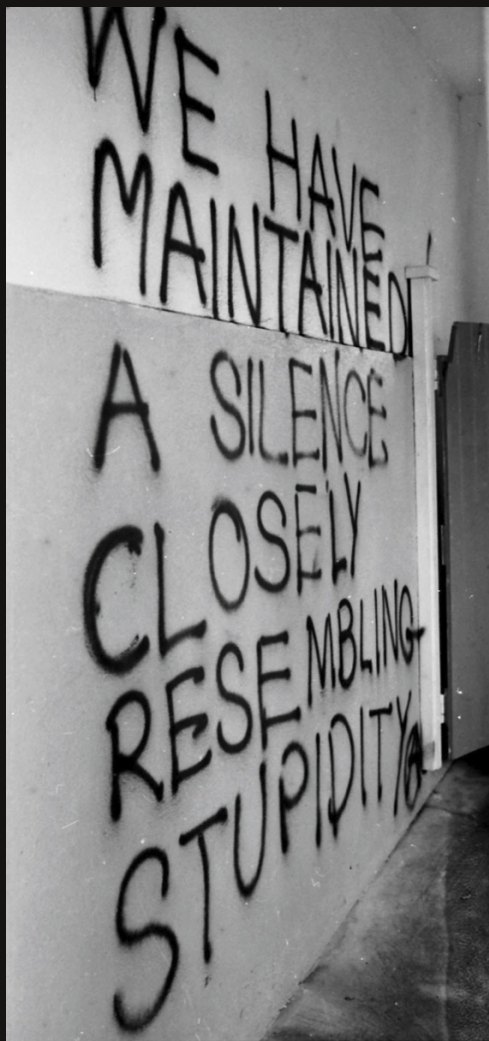


Issue Three November 2014

aargh!



Aotearoa Anarchist Review

EDITORIAL

WELCOME to the third issue of AARGH! (the Aotearoa Anarchist Review for Good Housekeeping). We have now published three issues in six months, but don't expect this frenetic pace to continue.

With the general election (but not its aftermath) behind us, we turn to matters of greater importance to anarchists: how society should and could be effectively run by all the people and for all the people. This kind of society would be radically different from the one we currently live in.

Articles in this issue include a prescription for an ideal anarchist health service, commentaries on the minimum wage, a political review of that old family favourite, *The Sound of Music*, and a dissertation on why Facebook is evil.

Anarchism is a political movement that aims to give everyone an equal role in social decision-making. Anarchists oppose social and economic hierarchies, for example those imposed by capitalism and globalisation. Anarchists are in favour of a worldwide class struggle and flax-roots revolution aimed at creating a self-managed, socialist and stateless social order. Individual freedom would coexist with community building, by means of truly democratic decision-making based on social and democratic equality.

Anarchists believe that the means used to achieve political change should be consistent with the end result and vice versa. They therefore oppose change that is achieved by violent means, or through hierarchical, elitist, anti-democratic methods, as employed by some other left-wing movements in the past.

The Freedom Shop celebrates its 20th birthday on 1st May 2015. We plan to mark the occasion with a massive party and live music, so write the date in your diary, calendar, or on the back of your hand now. We run an infoshop based in the Opportunity For Animals charity shop at 162 Riddiford Street, Newtown, Wellington. Our stock includes local DIY zines, t-shirts, patches, badges, music and print material covering anarchist, feminist, LGBT, indigenous, anti-colonial and other radical currents.

Cheers

The Freedom Shop Collective



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by the Freedom Shop Collective.**

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Making excuses

Capitalists and the minimum wage

By Sam Buchanan

SUGGESTING a rise in the minimum wage always creates much weeping and wailing or gnashing of teeth among capitalist economists. “Oh no”, they cry, “if you raise wages, prices will go up and unemployment will rise, nobody will be better off” and they limp off to cry crocodile tears over the fate of low-paid workers.

Of course, these arguments are obviously flawed. Firstly, wages make up only a proportion of the costs of goods and services, often a relatively small proportion depending on the particular industry, so a rise in wages does not mean an equal rise in prices. The rest of the cost covers rent, equipment, materials, unproductive (management) wages, debt-servicing and profit. In the places I’ve worked, and had access to the information, they mostly calculated my wages as being about a quarter of the cost of supplying a service or product. Secondly, most people in a company aren’t earning the minimum wage, so prices only need to rise to cover a small increase in a small part of the total wages bill, which is a small part of the total costs.

That, of course, assumes that prices need to rise at all. In many companies, the extra cost of a raise for low-paid workers could easily be covered by reducing profit, directors’ fees or salaries at the top end. Some companies are marginally profitable and might be genuinely unable to absorb the extra costs, and may therefore be forced to raise prices, but these are by no means all.

Economists like to talk as if the economy follows rigid rules (some such nutters even compare ‘economic laws’ to scientific laws) as if the economy was an automaton outside of human control (which is a bit weird because, when it suits them, the same economists also talk about the market economy as being a sum total of human decisions). In reality, what happens in the economy is a result of decisions made by those who control it, the wealthy and powerful a.k.a. the ruling class. Should wages rise, capitalists are likely to use it as an excuse to raise prices, but this is a choice, not a necessity.

What the economists are really saying is “if wages rise, companies will raise prices because they can, and as for reducing top salaries and profits, screw you!” In other words, they are making a class argument – “those who hold the power aren’t going to give up any of their privileges for the sake of you low-lives, so prices will have to rise to compensate them for paying workers more”. Which, to give them credit, is broadly accurate.

Nor is there any need for unemployment to rise if wages go up. Again, this is a choice based on maintaining a certain rate of profit. It’s possible that a few already marginal companies might go bust if the wage bill rises and they are unable to raise prices to cover costs, but the gaps in the market created should be filled by companies with managers competent enough to pay their workers properly. The only real cause here of unemployment is again a choice – to move production overseas where wages are lower, a process made possible by ‘free trade’ agreements (which have also been a result of decisions by the ruling class), or to move investment away from production into financial instruments, speculation and so forth, which result in little employment.

If economists were honest, they’d admit their arguments against raising the minimum wage amount to “workers can’t win under capitalism, either accept poverty wages or lose your job”.

There’s something in this, but I don’t want to be too bleak. Capitalists are good at forming arguments to demoralise workers, but, as I said before, the economy is not a machine. Pressure on capitalists, and keeping them frightened, can result in real gains, even within capitalism, and prove their claims false. While capitalists can manipulate the economy to minimise progress, a rise in minimum wages will have positive effects here and there. But only if public pressure makes demands on all fronts. It’s not enough to just demand a rise in wages, there also needs to be pressure for profits to be reduced and for capitalists to not be allowed to cut their wage bill by moving jobs to lower-paid workers overseas. Ultimately it comes down to power. Do the capitalists get to keep it, or will workers chip away at it? @@@

An Anarchist Prescription

By Ken V

THIS is a companion article to one in the last issue of *Aargh!* which analysed how neoliberalism has damaged the New Zealand health service. It describes what an ideal anarchist health system would look like.

Setting of an anarchist health service

Anarchism is based on co-operation and community. It might be possible to run a single hospital or retirement home on anarchist principles, to show how a better system could work, but an anarchist health service would necessarily exist within an anarchist society that followed the anarchist principles of individual freedom and social justice/equity.

Healthcare delivery should be according to need, not ability to pay. This principle is broken in most health services in the world. A privatised health care system is only able to meet all the requirements of those who can afford to pay for it, and so is unjust and unfair. The need for medical care is not dependent on income, and a civilised society should acknowledge this fact. Private medical insurance premiums are calculated according to the risks of the insured getting ill or injured, with the “riskiest” people unable to get insurance at any price.

This is incompatible with equality and mutual respect, and most anarchists are in favour of a socialised and universal health care system for both ethical and efficiency reasons. An anarchist socialised health care system would be different from the current systems of universal health care provided by the state in most countries. In the richest country in the world, the USA, millions have no access to healthcare and hundreds of thousands of people die annually from preventable or treatable diseases.

Medicine, like any public service, should serve the community, not the other way round. A genuinely democratic society is more likely to provide children, disabled people, minority groups and the elderly with

proper healthcare than political and economic systems run by a wealthy elite, and to allow people to participate meaningfully in their own healthcare.

An anarchist society would respect individual choice that was not detrimental to other individuals. People would not be forced to join a mutual insurance scheme if they preferred to pay for health needs as they arose, and health workers could work outside the free system if they wished. However, a communal arrangement would require everyone in the community to contribute in some way to maintain the system and it is likely that most people would prefer to use the free service. The healthcare system would not be imposed on those who did not want it. If they were not part of a local commune or syndicate they would have to pay for treatment. However, those who could not pay would be accommodated.

Rationing would still be necessary, since funds are not infinite, but it would be decided by the whole community rather than the state or other vested interests.

The “Inverse care law”

Fair and equitable provision of health care is not the same as equal provision. Obviously, some people will need more healthcare than others. Use of health services should be proportional to the need for it, not to the ability of the patient or their family to pay. In a privatised system or semi-public system what usually happens is that most health care spending is by and for the wealthy and articulate, while most sickness is suffered by the poorer members of society. This has been described as the “inverse care law”.

Healthcare and the state

The state, being based on violence and coercion, causes a significant amount of ill health (emotional, mental and physical) through violence, trauma, stress

and poverty, and denial of access to resources including education. Corporations (including the corporate media) contribute similarly, encouraging overwork, poor diets, overconsumption, pollution etc. The result is disempowerment as well as physical harm. Low income reduces life expectancy and unequal distribution of income impacts on average life expectancy.

Under neoliberal capitalism, healthcare is seen as an industry rather than a public good, and ways are sought and legislated in order to make a profit from it. Expensive healthcare does not serve the community as a whole, but only those who can afford to pay and those making a profit out of it. However, even in the US, a safety net is provided for those unable to pay, to avoid public outrage and rebellion.

In an anarchist society a minority would not benefit at the expense of everyone else. Public utilities such as health care could take the form of a consumer co-operative, controlled by those who use it and run by those who work in it. An anarchist healthcare service would be inclusive of people with disabilities or mental health needs, as in the wider anarchist society. This system of socialised health care would be based around local communes (self-managed communities or cooperatives). For the first time, public services would truly be public – not a statist or corporate system imposed upon the public from above.

Anarchist healthcare in practice

The Spanish Revolution in the 1930s saw the establishment of an anarchist health service in Catalonia and other areas. Many rural doctors joined the local collective and provided their services in the same way as workers in other occupations. Where there were no local doctors, collectives ensured that their members were treated in nearby hospitals. Some collectives built, equipped and staffed hospitals, such as the hospital in Binefar, Aragon, run by the Monzon federation of collectives and available to anyone in the 32 surrounding villages. In April 1937 it had 40 beds and specialist departments of general medicine, preventive medicine and gynaecology, dealing with around 25 outpatients daily

In Catalonia health care was provided in a slightly different way, still organised on the same libertarian principles. Medical care was free, with collectives contributing money to their health centre where possible. Buildings were upgraded and modern equipment acquired. The health service was organised at all levels by general assemblies of workers who elected delegates and administrators. A health workers' union was founded in September 1936. Following the tendency to unite all the different classifications, trades, and services in a given

industry, all health workers, from porters to doctors and administrators, were organised into one large union of health service workers.

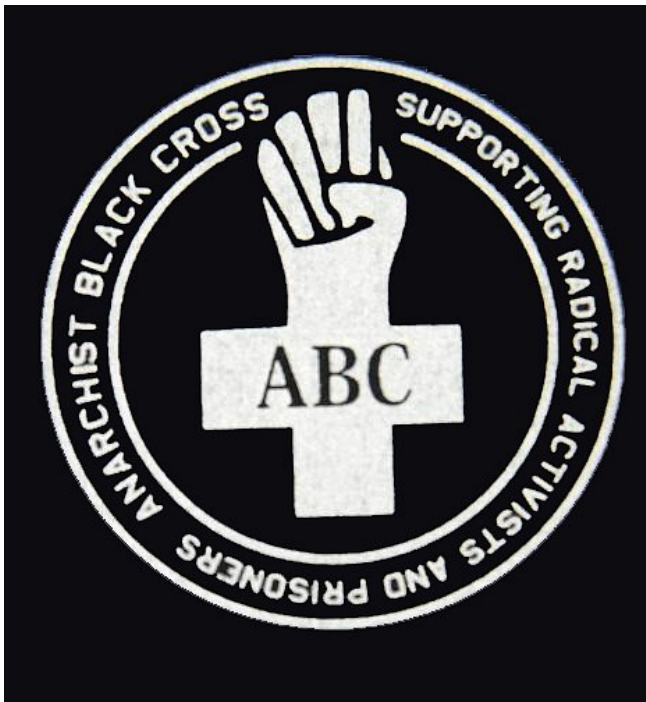
All over Spain health workers, in association with local collectives, communes and unions affiliated to the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo (CNT, the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labour) re-organised the health sector in accordance with libertarian principles. In the Levante, the CNT expanded its Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos de Levante (a health service institution employing many doctors and specialists), formed by the union as a mutual benefit society. Throughout the revolution, the Mutua employed 50 doctors and served all affiliated workers and their families.

Barcelona's Medical Syndicate, organised mainly by anarchists, ran 18 hospitals (six of which it had set up), 17 sanatoria, 22 clinics, six psychiatric establishments, three nurseries, and one maternity hospital. Outpatient departments were formed in all the principal localities in Catalonia. When requested, the syndicate sent doctors to places in need. The doctor would have to give good reason for refusing the post, "for it was considered that medicine was at the service of the community, and not the other way round." Funds for outpatient clinics were contributed by local municipalities. The anarchist Health Workers' Union included 8,000 health workers, 1,020 of them doctors, and also 3,206 nurses, 133 dentists, 330 midwives, and 153 herbalists. The union ran 36 health centres throughout Catalonia, providing healthcare to everyone. There were nine zones, each with a central syndicate, and in Barcelona a Control Committee made up of one delegate from each section met weekly to attend to common problems and carry out a common plan. Every department was autonomous but not isolated, as they supported each other. Outside Catalonia, free healthcare was supplied to agrarian collectives throughout Aragon and the Levante.

According to Gaston Leval:

"The socialisation of health services was one of the greatest achievements of the revolution. To appreciate the efforts of our comrades it must be borne in mind that they rehabilitated the health service in all of Catalonia in so short a time after July 19th. The revolution could count on the co-operation of a number of dedicated doctors whose ambition was not to accumulate wealth but to serve the afflicted and the underprivileged."

Recent examples of groups providing anarchist health care are the Anarchist Black Cross, which provides care to demonstrators, and the Common



Ground Collective which provided a rapid response in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005. Activist street medics and a former Black Panther set up the Common Ground clinic in one of the poorest neighbourhoods. They were quickly helped by hundreds of anarchists and other volunteers from across the USA, most of them without experience. Funded by donations and run by volunteers, the Common Ground clinic treated tens of thousands of people. It was so well organised that it out-performed the Red Cross, which had much greater experience and finances. Common Ground went on to address wider community issues that impact on health, including community gardens and housing rights.

The Boston Area Liberation Medic Squad (BALM Squad) formed in 2001. They treat injuries from pepper spray, tear gas, clubs, tasers, rubber bullets, police horses and more, as well as shock and trauma. They travel to major protests in other cities as well their own, and hold training sessions in emergency first aid. They are non-hierarchical and use consensus decision-making, as does the Bay Area Radical Health Collective, a similar group on the West Coast of the USA.

Preventive and community medicine

Public health and community medicine are synonymous. They imply a holistic overview of health needs focussed not on individual patients or diseases but on preventive measures to preserve the health of all, based on monitoring of disease prevalence, causes and outcome. Community and preventive medicine should represent a co-operative contract between individuals, the communities they live in, healthcare

workers and others with mutual responsibilities for promoting a healthy society.

In an ideal healthcare system, illness would be prevented or detected as early as possible if not able to be prevented. Free medical care ensures that cost is not a barrier to maintaining one's health and obtaining timely attention. Persuading people to voluntarily look after their health should be easier in a mutualist anarchist community compared with an individualist, laissez-faire, market-driven one.

Prevention, as the saying goes, is better than cure, and much more cost-effective. It is the most powerful way of dealing with healthcare in a society. Unfortunately, a private capitalist health system aimed at maximising profit out of treating illness may not be so concerned with preventing disease. The food industry, also aimed at maximising profit, is not concerned with providing healthy food, but rather cheap and unhealthy products that people will buy in preference, or out of poverty. Industry has been allowed to pollute the environment in pursuit of profit, with health consequences for many. The regulation of asbestos, tobacco and carbon pollution have been fought vigorously by business interests and their hired lobbyists.

Environmental impacts

Health services, particularly hospitals, are high users of fossil fuels through heating, staff travel, the manufacture and procurement of equipment and disposables, and are wasteful of scarce resources. With its strong community focus, an anarchist health service would aim to reduce environmental damage as far as possible.

Modern medical technology and equipment

The healthcare provided in the Spanish revolution was up-to-date but much less technically advanced than today's system. Modern specialised medicine and surgery require expensive machines, facilities and drugs, but can suffer from duplication of resources, as occurs in the New Zealand health service's public and private sectors. Most people, however, do not need specialised treatment or facilities and can be treated by a medic or a community doctor, being referred to a specialist hospital for advanced treatment if required.

DIY healthcare

First aid, home remedies and using medicines available without prescription are examples of do-it-yourself healthcare, as changing lightbulbs and fuses are examples of DIY electrical work. In an anarchist health system, DIY care would be taught and encouraged, including preventive health care.

For the provision of more complex health issues,

however, it is envisaged that professional associations of doctors and nurses, health worker training and certification systems, and mutually agreed standards of practice would be similar to those now in place. As now, people would be free to consult alternative practitioners, but in many cases, such as surgery, most would choose a practitioner with the appropriate years of training, expertise and licensing by a professional body.

Administration and self-management

An anarchist health service would be run in a democratic, non-hierarchical way. Hospitals would be managed by all the people working in them, not by a director or board making decisions for everyone else.

An anarchist health service would be based on self-management, with close links to local communes and federations of communes. Each hospital or health centre would be autonomous but linked in a federation with the others, allowing resources to be shared as necessary while enabling the health service to react to and meet local needs as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In the ideal anarchist society, health workers would organise their workplaces, form federations to share resources and information, and make plans to improve the quality of care. The communes and their federations, the syndicates (self-managed workplaces) and federations of syndicates, would supply the financial means and thereby own the health system, ensuring universal access to its services.

All public services operating in a social anarchist society would reflect what the members of that society want. If a commune, or federation of communes, wants a system of communal health care, facilities and treatments, they will allocate resources to make it happen. They will delegate the formation of such a system to, say, a special body of volunteers or delegates from the relevant syndicates, professional associations, consumer groups and others. Administration would be based, as in any industry under anarchism, on the people working in it. Operational self-management would be the case, with doctors, nurses, cleaners and others all managing their work. The general running of a hospital would be administered by a general assembly of all workers, who would elect and mandate delegates to decide and act on the agreed policies. A service run directly by all interested parties, including users, would be more productive and reliable than a state-run system. A similar system would operate for other public services such as education.

“Self-management” can also refer to people who

manage their own treatment, for example patients with diabetes who monitor their blood glucose and adjust their insulin doses without immediate input from a healthcare worker.

Funding

In anarchism the means and ends must be consistent. Funding, like provision of health care, would be equitably sourced and allocated. Payment of workers would reflect anarchist principles and there would be no bureaucrats on high salaries or ancillary workers (cleaners and kitchen staff) earning minimum wages.

As in the historical Spanish example, the community would own, fund and run the healthcare system instead of the state or private capitalist corporations. The resources required to maintain and expand the system would be provided by communes, syndicates and their federations. The health service would be truly public and socialised, not a state-run structure imposed upon the public from above, nor a system by which a few get rich by exploiting a natural monopoly. With the profit motive completely removed from healthcare provision, a rational and more cost-effective system would flourish.

Other forms of funding, such as non-profit insurance schemes funded by subscription to a co-operative, have the disadvantage of requiring everyone to pay, regardless of circumstances, and are still in effect privatised healthcare. There could be a tendency to exclude or limit people with high health needs, particularly if it was considered that they had brought their sickness on themselves by lifestyle choices.

Democracy and health

Patients in an anarchist healthcare service would be fully involved in decision-making about their treatment. Consent would be fully informed, after detailed consultation and answering all questions. Non-workers (patients, for example) in the health system would also have a say and a role by giving feedback to enable quality control of health services and to ensure that the service is responding appropriately to all users' needs @@@

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They want our walls

By Peppertree

GERMANY'S graffiti legend Oz died tragically on 25 September 2014. He was hit by a train while he was apparently spraying by the side of a track in Hamburg.

What made 64-year-old Walter Josef Fischer different from most taggers, apart from his age, were two things. One was his productivity – police claim that Oz had been responsible for more than 120,000 tags. His trademark “Oz.” tag or a smiley face are ubiquitous in Hamburg and made him famous all over Germany. The other thing was his resilience. He was arrested and charged countless times, and he spent a total of eight years in prison for tagging. Several times he was arrested spray-can in hand, within hours after having been released from custody.

But most importantly, Oz defended tagging as an act of political protest. In times where public space is becoming increasingly privatised and the onslaught of corporate messages on our senses is constant, a tag is a break in the continuum of advertisements that make up the modern street-scape.

Oz talked about the fascist imagery of conformity that the advertising industry employs in order to impose their normative standards. Billboards only show a certain type and class of people and the slogans perfectly match the image. The tiniest of tags disrupts the composition and distracts the viewer. Therefore, the “clean-Nazis”, as Oz called them, can't tolerate graffiti. The comparison with the Nazis is no coincidence – conformity and tidiness were core to their ideology.

That explains why the tabloid media ran a hate campaign against him, and Hamburg's right-wing deputy mayor once wanted him in prison for life. He was hospitalised by train guards several times.

Despite all that, Oz was lucky he didn't live in NZ. In 2008, 15-year-old Pihema Cameron was stabbed to death by an angry Auckland property owner, who caught him tagging his fence. Such is the paranoia of the NZ “clean-Nazis” that a simple tag can lead to a murder, with the killer insisting that he had acted in self-defence.

Here, the urge to keep grey walls grey and ugly power boxes ugly is an issue on which local body elections are won or lost.

Recently, the Wellington Regional Council opened a new \$3.3 million CCTV centre in Johnsonville that collects the live pictures

from 660 cameras on the region's train stations. While the cops claim that this is “mostly about public safety”, they immediately contradict themselves by pointing to the biggest success of the system being the arrest of – a tagger.

Unfortunately the young man who was caught breaking into a train yard in Upper Hutt is unlikely to receive the same amount of support that Oz received in 2011 when he faced 19 charges of wilful damage. After his arrest, art galleries show-cased his work to raise money for his lawyer, and protesters at Mayday demos demanded his freedom. Earlier this year, a book about him was published and it seems that since then his graffiti has been elevated officially to “art” status.

Since his death, obituaries for Oz have been coming from everywhere. Fans of the local football club FC St Pauli staged a massive choreography in his honour and even the players posed with an “Oz” placard. There is an online petition to have his graffiti preserved, which seems somewhat odd, given that his tags were never meant to last.

With all the stories in the mainstream media, one can't help but get the impression that people who until recently wanted him in prison are jumping on the Oz bandwagon. And capitalism wouldn't be capitalism if it wouldn't churn out Oz memorabilia of all sorts soon. I'm sure there will be advertising billboards promoting designer brand Oz t-shirts. But who is going to tag them? @@@



Mayday demo, Hamburg 2011.

We Need to Talk About acebook

By Sojourner

A FRIEND of mine has started to use Facebook. They're someone who identifies as an anarchist and fights against surveillance. They say they use Facebook because it helps them to follow what is happening in the world and to stay in contact with people.

It's as if my friend is parroting Facebook's *raison d'être*: “to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet” (Facebook.com). However, above and beyond all the noble reasons my friend has, they say one key reason to finally use Facebook is because ‘everyone else is doing it’.

I won't get into that debate, about who is ‘everyone’, who uses Facebook and who doesn't. Or how widely used it is around the world and which communities use it more than others – I will just accept that a great number of people in certain parts of the world do use it. But on the flip-side, what I will point out to my friend is that just as ‘everyone is using it’, ‘everyone is watching it’. Facebook is a mass surveillance tool.

If you believe the Hollywood movie¹ about Facebook, it may have started with ‘innocent’ intentions based on a simple philosophy, but there is now no doubting it: Facebook is a tool used for data collection and surveillance. It ‘is the most subtle, cheapest and best surveillance technology available.’²

Facebook is a collection of all the little personal thoughts and details, and pictures and links, that

people post. Surveillance agencies love this sort of thing and suck up and digest all the meta-data around a single Facebook page. All those myriads of friends, those ‘likes’ and mentions of others, the minutiae of so many people's lives, not to mention the IP addresses people are using, help to show who you are. That is, what type of person you are, what your beliefs and thoughts are, how you identify yourself and who your friends are.

Using a pseudonym or turning on filters and not posting personal pictures doesn't work. Practising safe-Facebook does not protect a Facebook user or their acquaintances because in the Facebook world, names don't always matter. The links between friends on social pages, the dates and meetings and ‘likes’, the pages set up solely to advertise bands, books, poetry readings, petitions, hui, rallies and public meetings – these all help to show social relationships and political connections and beliefs.

Talking only about ‘legal and legit’ things also doesn't protect you or your friends. Even if you believe in that definition of things, those surveilling don't care. They collect data on everyone, but especially those who may be in opposition to them.

Remember, surveillance is not always aimed at prosecuting individuals. Surveillance is often about profiling certain sectors of society.

The majority of state repression is not a response to an attack but it is ‘a means to preserve normalcy’ –

‘to maintain the status quo’³. The surveillors are not just interested in the secret talks we have, they are interested in everything. The state wants to know what is happening.

Surveillance creep

Facebook is a tool that allows different agencies in-depth collection of a huge amount of meta-data and content that can be used to map and predict future trends and political actions; it helps the state to maintain power.

Facebook simplifies what must have been a much more difficult chore of building profiles and keeping tabs on people and groups in the pre-Facebook world. For example, in the past, to get the same amount of information, people would have had to pay informers or infiltrate meetings. They would have had to stand on street corners to see who was attending meetings, others would have followed people or stood for hours in the cold watching and recording who was buying the local left-wing rag – now Facebook does it for them⁴. We hand all that data to them on a plate. For eternal storage.

Facebook has heralded (or maybe coincided with) a changing social norm. Privacy used to be something cherished, but now it seems as if people want to bare all. It is increasing common for people to share an enormous amount of the minuti of their lives online. It is as if people are literally compelled to provide a constant stream of information about themselves. I find it a disturbing spiral: Facebook normalises the exposure of self → Facebook allows constant observation → surveillance becomes normalised → people bare themselves on Facebook because it is normal → Facebook normalises → Facebook allows → etc...etc... it is surveillance creep.

Self-exposure is becoming an accepted norm. As Zuckerberg himself said, the ‘concept of privacy is no longer a social norm’.⁵

But the use of Facebook should not be an argument between surveillance and privacy. It runs much deeper than that. It is an argument about surveillance and its role in society.

Surveillance is not new

Surveillance is not something new that cropped up after 9/11 or appeared during the fight against the Fiscal Envelope in 1995 or the re-occupation of Pākaitore. It did not spring anew in the build-up to 1981 and the protests against the Springbok rugby tour here, nor was it new for te Hikoi in 1975.



Surveillance is old. It is older even than the colonisation of this land.

Way back in France in the 17th Century, Napoleon’s minister of policing talked of the importance of surveillance to maintain control of the population. He perceived the need within the public administration to not only have a structure (criminal policing) to ensure public order, but also a structure (intelligence policing) to watch and observe and note what was happening in society to ensure the ‘preservation of the political regime’⁶. Forms of intelligence-

style policing have continued since. What some people describe as an extreme version of intelligence policing were the Stasi and KGB.

Intelligence policing exists to today. It came here with colonisation. In the early 1800s, when the police were a para-military organisation who came here to help the English Queen wrest control of this land, there was another form of ‘police’ too – those whose job it was to surveille. Their job was to ensure state control could be set in place and maintained. And they have worked consistently ever since to ensure that surveillance is accepted as a normal part of life, and they have succeeded. It has reached a stage where we unthinkingly participate in our own surveillance.

Surveillance is now so normalised that the boundaries between state and corporate surveillance are blurred. With the constant digitalisation of so much in our world, we are becoming used to giving over statistical data about ourselves without thinking twice about it. Buying a ticket at Ticketek means giving over almost as much information as is needed to get a passport, but we do it. And Facebook is one of those places we do it. However, with Facebook people not only give up personal statistical information but also often their private thoughts, they expose their very ‘soul’.

And my friend might think they are sharing and expressing themselves with only their friends, but in reality they are sharing their life with their own enemies.

Facebook is not your friend

A quick look at the set-up of Facebook and a who’s who of Facebook management should give most people, including my friend, the heebie-jeebies.

The people behind Facebook are not friendly. They are capitalists with disturbing links and inter-connections. For example, have you heard of Peter Thiel? Peter Thiel was the first outside investor in

Facebook. He's the co-founder of Pay-Pal and the owner of Palantir, the company that runs Prism, the NSA surveillance tool that made headlines in 2013. (Palantir, by the way, pre-dates Facebook.) The start-up money for Palantir came from the CIA venture capitalist fund In-Q-Tel (IQT)⁷. They have an office in downtown Wellington, Palantir,⁸ that is.

Peter Thiel has interesting views, he's a member of the radical conservative group Vanguard; a group that thinks Hillary Clinton is left-wing. He's a philosopher and believes that humans are like sheep: we act, follow orders and norms without thinking.

Another friend of Facebook that is not a friend of ours is John Poindexter. Poindexter was a US military aid in the Reagan regime, he lost his job in what became known as the 'Iran-Contra' Scandal. Poindexter is a total scumbag, and he's linked with the IAO (Information Awareness Office), the TIA (Total Information Awareness) system and DARPA (the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency)⁹.

Poindexter worked for DARPA for years, and after 9/11, Poindexter (along with a mate) got approval to establish the IAO to build a total information awareness programme, in other words a giant surveillance network. IAO came under the umbrella of DARPA. IAO's aim was to gather as much information as possible about everyone in a centralised location for easy perusal by the United States government. The goal of TIA¹⁰ was to integrate commercial and government databases and thus allow the US state to maintain a comprehensive data profile on all its citizens (I'm sure the reality was ultimately data profiles on all people).

After TIA's existence became public the US government officially closed it down. That was in 2003. It was too much of a hot-potato for various reasons: it was linked with Poindexter, it reeked of 'Big Brother' and the IAO had a terrible official emblem (they also had lousy powerpoints). There was the potential of a public outcry against it.

However, we know that the NSA continued to do what the TIA and OIA had been doing. Different leaks over the years revealed the continuation of these programmes¹¹. But it wasn't until Edward Snowden that a lot more people began to take note and realise the enormity of the surveillance enabled by the electronic world that we now live in.

And the link between OIA, DARPA, TIA, Poindexter and Facebook? Well, the original investors in Facebook all were connected with DARPA¹². I also find it interesting that the huge investment in Facebook occurred at the time of the growing backlash against the TIA. But then that,

of course, could be only coincidence.

However, I really don't think the people behind Facebook are our friends. I do not trust them.

Conclusion

I believe Facebook is dangerous. I wish my friend had not begun to use it. We are meant to be fighting the same enemy, but at the moment my friend is participating in their own surveillance and collaborating in mass surveillance of society.

So please, my friend, think about your use of Facebook; it has consequences. Think about what you are doing. Facebook is not your friend, it is supporting the regime.

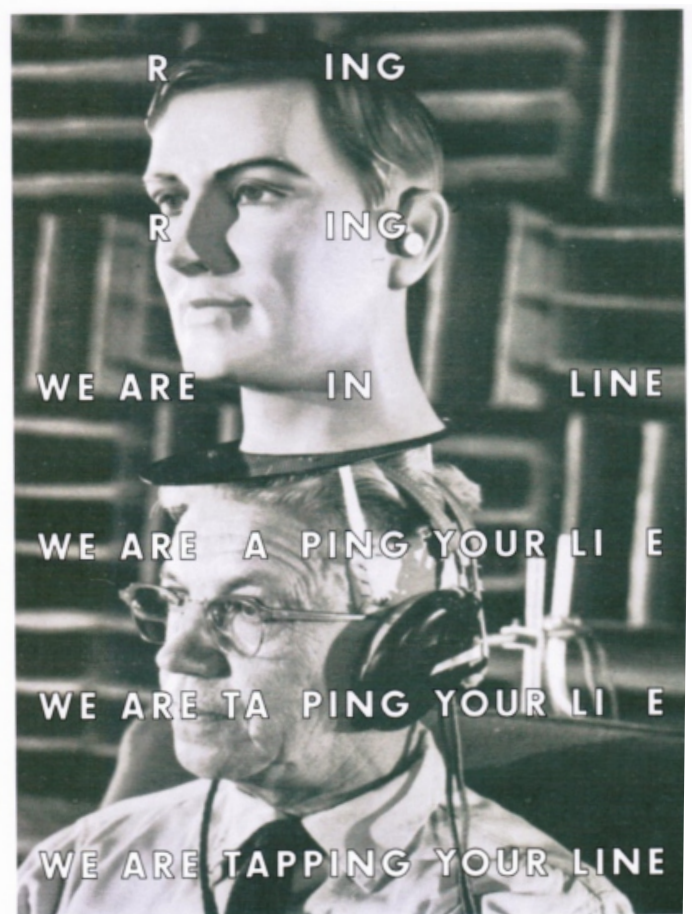
And if none of my arguments are worth listening to, what about just pondering these thoughts:

- Corporate companies aren't motivated by your best interests, do you really want to keep making capitalist scumbags wealthier?

- And if you can give up instant noodles¹³ for ethical reasons, surely you can give up Facebook? @@@

Notes

1. *The Social Network* gives one version of the setting up of Facebook, go online and read other versions.
2. Search online for keywords "Anna and Arthur".



3. Williams K 2013 *Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency*. AK Press.
4. Obviously traditional surveillance still does continue, but Facebook makes it so much easier to get so much more info.
5. He also said about Facebook users, “they trust me, the dumb fucks.”
6. Haggerty K and & Ericson R eds. (2006). *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*. University of Toronto Press.
7. IQT's mission is to “identify, adapt and deliver innovative technology solutions to support the missions of the Central Intelligence Agency and broader US Intelligence Community.” (<https://www.iqt.org/>)
8. Search online for keywords Palantir, Wellington,

government, defence.

9. DARPA helped set-up the internet as we know it.

10. TIA got renamed to Terrorism Information Awareness as a result of a bit of a public outcry against total surveillance of everyone.

11. Search online for keywords: nsa, surveillance, leaks, whistle-blower, for example, and read Harris S 2010 *The Watchers: The Rise of America's Surveillance State* Penguin Press.

12. Greenop M (August 8 2007). *Facebook – the CIA Conspiracy*. NZ Herald.

13. Instant noodles use palm oil, the use of palm oil is linked with deforestation in Sumatra and Borneo, the home of orang-utan. Orang-utan are a threatened species, unlike humans for now.

Molly McGuire's Cookery Corner presents:

EATS

Sopa de Gran Peña

THE NAME of this spicy bean soup derives from Gilbert Hernandez's stories in the *Love and Rockets* comic series. One resident of Palomar, a small Mexican village, cooks “Heartbreak Soup” for herself and a friend after being dumped by her boyfriend – the soup is supposed to turn your heart to stone. This version doesn't mend broken hearts, but it is fairly effective against sore throats, and, as most of the ingredients can be found in tins it is easily whipped up when you're feeling grotty.

Ingredients

Two or three cloves garlic

Fresh, pickled or powdered chilli

One tablespoon cumin seeds

Two teaspoons brown sugar

Salt

One 400 gram tin pinto, red kidney or white beans or the equivalent of cooked beans

One or two tins of chopped tomatoes

Half a capsicum, chopped (or use pickled capsicum)

Sweetcorn kernels (fresh, frozen or tinned)

A medium onion finely chopped

Chopped fresh coriander leaves

Oil

Method

Dry fry the cumin seeds in a frying pan for a few minutes until slightly brown, remove from pan. Put a teaspoon of oil in the pan and fry the whole garlic cloves until golden and soft. If you are using fresh chilli, fry alongside the garlic until soft. Now grind the cumin seeds to a powder in a pestle or mortar, or

coffee grinder, food processor or on a flat rock – whatever you have. Add the garlic, chilli and salt and mash or grind to a paste.

Fry the onion and capsicum in a tablespoon of oil in a saucepan until soft. Add the corn, beans, tomatoes, sugar and garlic/chilli paste and cook for five minutes. Check the seasoning and add more salt or chilli powder to taste. Add the coriander leaves and serve @@@



The Price of Fish?

The Death Ship by B Traven

Lawrence Hill Books, 1934,

ISBN 1556521103

The Catch by Michael Field

Awa Press, 2014, ISBN 9781927249024

Reviewed by Peppertree

WHEN I first read B. Traven's *The Death Ship*, I felt depressed at the sheer hopelessness of the story. The book, written 90 years ago, depicts the odyssey of an American sailor who loses his passport. On land as a *sans-papier*, the sailor gets shoved from country to country, until he ends up as a coal drag on a steam freighter. Because he (like the other crew) has no papers, he is at the mercy of the ship owner and the captain. There is no hope of him ever getting paid, nor can he jump ship in a harbour because – well, he has no papers. Later he discovers that his ship is a coffin ship, meaning that it is over-insured and intended to be sunk when no one is looking. The story is a scathing criticism of the fatal logic of nation states and of capitalism's principle of profit maximisation.

As depressing as the story is, I felt that this was almost a century ago and surely, today things would be better. But Fairfax and Radio NZ journalist Michael Field proved me wrong. His recent book *The Catch* reads like a modern reprint of *The Death Ship*. Except that Field's book is not a novel. It documents the real life of Indonesian crews on Korean trawlers, contracted by NZ companies.

The stories of the fishing crews resemble that of Traven's protagonist: their passports have been confiscated by the shipping company or their agents. Many have had to take out a credit with a loan shark or sign bonds for their family property in order to pay the agent (who then also gets a nice cut of the monthly wage of US\$200 for a 140-hour working week). If they leave the ship before their contract is finished they have to pay a fine to the agent that often exceeds their entire earnings. They are the property of the shipping company and treated like dirt by the



captain and the officers. In other words, they are slaves.

If someone dies on the job or the entire rotten ship sinks, no one ever finds out about the identities of the crew members, because their papers are kept by the agents somewhere in Indonesia. Just like Traven's sailor, it is as if they never existed.

So far, so terrible, but the thing is that these ships are contracted by NZ fishing companies, mainly Sealord and Sanford (the third major company, Talley, gets off lightly in Field's book). Sealord is owned by a company called Kura, which is half-owned by 57 iwi and a Japanese company. The Japanese company also owns a third of the company that carries out Japan's 'scientific' whaling. The fact that former riot cop Ross Meurant worked as a consultant for the NZ seafood industry for many years just seems to fit.

The Catch explains how the complicated web of shell companies, charter vessels, foreign flags and crewing agencies enables companies to sell their fish as "product of NZ" while at the same time skipping import tariffs in Korea and avoiding being subject to NZ (or any other country's) employment legislation. The book also explains why NZ politicians have been hesitant to change anything for a long time (a new law requiring fishing vessels to be registered in NZ will come into effect in 2015). The Ministry of Primary Industries feared that under such a law the NZ fishing industry would become "uncompetitive" and collapse.

As if to prove this point, a week after the release of *The Catch* Sealord announced plans to cut almost 100 jobs in its fish factory in Nelson because the factory is "not economically viable".

What the government is afraid of is that, should the NZ seafood industry fold, this could trigger a compensation claim by iwi who own shares in Sealord. The shares were part of a Treaty settlement, and if Sealord were to collapse due to a law change, the settlement would be null and void. This explains why Maori party MP Te Ururoa Flavell was one of

the most outspoken opponents of a bill that would force fishing companies to use NZ-flagged ships.

Field also looks at the plundering of the oceans worldwide. An extreme example of this was the pillaging of the Somali waters during the 1990s. While the country was disintegrating in a civil war, European, American and Asian companies took advantage of the situation and emptied the fish stock, leaving the local fishermen with nothing. Some of them started the “volunteer coastguard” which stopped foreign trawlers and demanded fees for the fish they were taking. The business model took off and the infamous “Somali piracy” started. As it turned out, this stopped the other pirates, the illegal fishing trawlers, more effectively than any other measure would have, and Somalia’s fish stocks recovered.

Interestingly, this complicated web of companies and sub-contracts outlined in *The Catch*, where no one is responsible for anything that happens on a ship, also played a role in some of the hijackings off the coast of Somalia. In some cases, after taking control of a ship, the Somali spent many days on the phone trying to establish who actually owned the ship. Just like in the case of the fish trawlers, the ship owners were willing to sacrifice the crew in order to maintain profits, sometimes for months. The film *The Captain and his Pirate* illustrates this well.

Unlike Traven, Field ends his book with an illogically positive outlook. He believes that the situation for both the fishing crews and the fish stocks can be solved by better regulation and new technology. Sadly, Traven’s novel seems more realistic. @@@ (*B Traven’s The Death Ship* is available from *The Freedom Shop* for \$20)

Three minute rant

Call the cops! I’m being inconvenienced!

By Sam Buchanan

A LITTLE while ago, we continued our ridiculous colonial tradition of lighting fireworks, supposedly to celebrate the failure of a guy who tried to blow up the English parliament back in 1605. It was great. As usual, we had a party down at the beach, toasted sausages and marshmallows over a fire, drank lime sodas and let off lots of fireworks. About a hundred people came, mostly kids; one of whom suffered a slight burn to their finger, but didn’t seem too bothered.

Meanwhile, about 30,000 people signed an on-line petition calling for the sale of fireworks to the public to be banned, and have fireworks limited to organised displays run by experts. They say fireworks are loud, cause accidents, frighten and injure animals and are a waste of money. Quite true, though the fire service said they had a pretty quiet time this year, no horrific injuries were reported, and compared with other forms of entertainment, fireworks are pretty cheap.

OK, so what? Isn’t this all a bit trivial given everything else that’s going on around the planet? In a way, yes. But I’m genuinely concerned that so many New Zealanders’ knee-jerk reaction to a problem is to demand the government criminalise something. Most of the problems caused by fireworks could be solved by having a chat with the neighbours or telling some kids not to be stupid – or do what I do, organise a fireworks party well away from other people with a few simple rules to keep kids safe and happy. But this takes a bit of effort. Much easier to demand the police and justice system step in to remove inconveniences and keep us ‘safe’. But we won’t be banning cigarettes, alcohol and cars because these lethal objects have a quality that to the bourgeoisie is the only thing that matters – they make money and make us more comfortable. Never mind the cost.

I don’t think the ‘ban fireworks’ lobby have thought much about what they are asking for – for the state to use its monopoly on violence, sending out police and judges to criminalise and punish anyone who sells a packet of sparklers to somebody the state hasn’t judged to be a licensed expert. It’s even scarier if I’m wrong and they have thought about it, and aren’t bothered.

This, like many other problems, seems to be a problem around the lack of community. Traditionally, any problems associated with fireworks were restricted to festival days, as fireworks were a communal activity. With increasing individualism, communal festivals have died away and so we are left with either displays put on by experts (in which we are reduced to passive spectators) and individuals letting the things off here, there and everywhere. So we now have the choice of engaging with each other and sorting out an organised experience, or we are told we have to ban private use and let the state decide where and when we are allowed to watch fireworks. And then we are expected to be grateful to the state and the capitalists for providing us with entertainment. Another nail in the coffin of self-organisation @@@

Maintaining a memory

Dear Neil Roberts by Airini Beautrais

VUP Press, 2014, ISBN 9780864739735

Reviewed by Ann R Key



Neil Roberts

I'M NOT from New Zealand, and I'm also not much of a sophisticate when it comes to poetry. I read what I like, skim, or ignore the rest, I can't really tell you why I like what I do or what is good about it, just that for whatever reason a particular line or idea, mood or thought spoke to me and that was enough. But don't ask me about structure or form, or poetic traditions because I don't know. So I might not be the best person to review Airini Beautrais' new book of poetry, *Dear Neil Roberts* (Victoria Press, 2014). But I am an anarchist and I have been here in New Zealand long enough that I had been told the story of Neil Roberts before.

In case you haven't, the short version is that on 18 November 1982 anarchist and punk Neil Roberts blew himself up with a bomb he exploded outside the Wanganui Computer Centre. The Computer Centre held a large computer which held the National Law Enforcement Data Base. That database and the computer's ability to record, store, and analyse personal information was seen as dangerous to civil libertarians. Sound familiar? Maybe this was the beginning of New Zealand's obsession with surveillance? Anyway, Neil Roberts was 22 at the time and shortly before he exploded the bomb he left spray-painted "We have maintained a silence closely resembling stupidity" on the wall of a public toilet near the computer centre.

Dear Neil Roberts is a collection of interconnected poems that seeks to make sense of not just who Neil Roberts was and why he did what he did, but what that time period was; just after the 1981 Springbok tour, Muldoon still in power, and that feeling of alienation and disenfranchisement strong. The poems try to understand of all this. The author is searching for what it means for her, what it means for New Zealand, for her children, and for young anarchists who might not be so young nor so militant anymore.

I'm not a Kiwi, and I'm not a poet, but like I said I am an anarchist and I do know about history. I think a lot about anarchist history, how important or not important it is to other anarchists and what that means; to me and more importantly for anarchism. I think a lot about history in general, about what

history means for the present, about how we create and consume history, and how, sometimes no matter how hard we try, we get it wrong when we try to write about history, when we try to create a historical narrative to make sense of the past. Anarchists and anarchist history are as guilty of this as anyone else. We have our martyrs, our heroes and heroines, and all too often people are more interested in the slogans and the easily digestible and self re-affirming stories, then they are in the more complicated realities and contradictory facts.

Maybe we need poetry to help us understand history. To help us understand that my three-sentence summary of who Neil Roberts was and what he did will never be enough, not enough to understand all the multiple and contradictory ideas and thoughts he may have had in his head at the time, nor is it enough to read the news headlines to understand what kind of impact his words and his actions had on the people of New Zealand, from the police, to the anarchists, to a poet and young mother in Whanganui 32 years later trying to understand how it all fits together.

Dear Neil Roberts did that for me. The poems give the reader a fuller and broader understanding of Neil Roberts and what happened, and what it may have meant, than my paragraph or paragraphs could. And they reminded me of Emma Goldman's essay *The Tragedy at Buffalo* written following the 1901 assassination of US President William McKinley by Leon Czolgozs, a self-described anarchist. In the essay Goldman tries to make sense of what kind of sensitive person would be so outraged by the world around him, by its inequalities, injustices, lies, and uglinesses, that he would lash out, strike a blow against that world, even if it meant destroying oneself in the process. This history, these people, they are as much a part of our anarchist history, of our movement, as marches against war and fights against police surveillance and it behooves us and our movement to try to understand that a little bit better. Airini Beautrais has done this with *Dear Neil Roberts* and it's worth all our time to read these poems @@@

Freedom as a Spectator Sport...

The Sound of Music

Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

St James Theatre, Wellington

Reviewed by Sam Buchanan



IT IS HARD to fault the production of the recent stage show of *The Sound of Music*, it looks great and manages to entertain despite the sappy plot, mediocre songs and unmemorable characters. Terrific sets and lighting giving a cinematic feel at times, and the singing and music is very well done. But, anyway, you've missed it now and the tickets were pricey unless you had a flatmate working backstage to get you free tickets, so never mind the show, what about the politics?

Interestingly, anti-authoritarian themes run through the show. Parental authoritarianism is ridiculed, resistance to fascism celebrated, the wealthy sneered at and fun is poked at the controlled and ordered life of a nunnery. Yet the whole thing is as cheesy as well-ripened Roquefort, and nobody is going to leave the theatre (or cinema) thinking revolutionary thoughts. How come?

Rodgers and Hammerstein are noted for addressing serious themes in their otherwise fluffy romantic musicals, particularly the anti-racist musical *South Pacific*, which was decried by a couple of US politicians who claimed one of its songs "contained an underlying philosophy inspired by Moscow". In *The Sound of Music*, Maria, an Austrian nun, depicted as unable to keep to the rules and requirements of the convent, is sent to act as a governess to the children of a titled former naval officer. She immediately challenges his military-styled parenting and teaches them music, previously banned in the house. They fall in love, he dumps his millionaire girlfriend in order to marry her, the *Anschluss* takes place, uniting Austria with Nazi Germany. He refuses to serve in the German navy and after offering token, but dangerous, resistance to the Nazis, the family slip away and clamber over the mountains to Switzerland.

This isn't too far from the true story of the von Trapp family the musical is based on. But in fact, while they were anti-Nazi, the family took the train out of Austria quite openly, heading for Italy, and returned to Austria for a bit before the war. Maria von Trapp says she didn't marry for love, but on the instructions of the church, and that her husband was never the authoritarian, anti-music, parent the musical makes out. The latter, a World War One submarine commander, also seriously considered taking up the Nazi navy job (he needed the salary), rather than rejecting it outright as the show suggests.

The Sound of Music is a perfect example of the relationship the 'liberal' establishment, the well-meaning social democrats, has for the idea of liberty. They find it very nice in theory and a perfect theme for fiction. It's a laugh, it's attractive, it sounds good to say you support it, but in reality, it's all a bit too much. Nazism provides a historical moment, well buried in history, when even liberals can support rebellion, which makes them feel righteous. But most genuine resistance to fascism was a brutal and difficult thing, mostly engaged in by radicals rather than upper-class aristocrats (the fictional von Trapps are much richer than the historical family). In the movie version, the politics are further played down with the removal of the song *No Way to Stop It*, in which the wealthy cynically sing their willingness to accommodate themselves to the Third Reich.

Closer to the present, and closer to home, social democrats offer little support to those who oppose dictatorships, finding resistance to authority uncomfortable and politically challenging. They are willing to offer moral support, but practical support involves getting their hands dirty and possibly undermining their own privileges. Freedom doesn't sound so appealing when your own role in supporting oppression is called into question.

And it's fun to present authoritarian parents as comic figures, easily enlightened by a rebellious nun who encourages kids to play games, sing and trample on the furniture. But it's hard to imagine the people making up most of the audience at expensive theatrical productions going home and encouraging their own kids to run amok @@@